


FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL
MISSOURI SYNOD • KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE



First Hearts November 2025

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From the Pastor

Saints and Thanksgiving

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we enter November, the Church's rhythm of grace leads us from All Saints' Day to Thanksgiving, weaving together two observances that, at first glance, may seem unrelated. But when we view them through the eyes of faith in Christ, we uncover a profound and life-changing truth: everything we are, everything we have—our salvation, our daily bread, even our calling as saints—are not achievements, but precious gifts from our loving God.

On All Saints' Day, we give thanks to God for the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us in the faith (Heb 12:1). We say the first names of the blessed dead, for there are no last names if one is in Christ. We pray that we be kept in the

same faith as the saints who now rest from their labors. We are also reminded that though we do not see them, they gather with us around the Lamb who was slain, whose blood has set us free as the children of God. This is the Lamb who washed us clean and made us white as snow by His blood (Rev. 7:9-14).

In the Divine Service, heaven descends to earth. Some theologians are a bit more explicit and say that “heaven invades earth.” Heaven is coming to us. “Therefore, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven.” All the company of heaven is those who have gone before us. Their song of praise is now our song. Their feast is now our feast.

The lives of the faithful departed remind us that faith is what saves. Katie Luther once said, “I will cling to my Lord Christ as a burr on a coat.” That’s the kind of faith to which we are called—a faith that clings to Christ’s promises in pain, sorrow, happiness, and pleasure. Their example compels us to hold fast, even when life is difficult, and inspires us to look forward with confident hope to the resurrection of the body and the joy of an unending feast. Let their witness stir you to trust more deeply in God’s promises and rejoice in the future He has prepared for you.

A few weeks later, we pause for Thanksgiving. With family and friends, we pause and give a special thanks for our daily bread. And this thanksgiving is not just for one day in November, it happens every time we receive the Eucharist as well. The word “Eucharist” means “thanksgiving.” Every time we are at the Lord’s table and receive His body and blood, we are participating in Thanksgiving. Here we are fed with the saints before us, beside us, and behind us.

The Small Catechism says that “God gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.” True Thanksgiving flows from receiving the gifts of God and holding on to them. Thanksgiving flows from being a sainted one, a baptized one, a receiver of God’s gifts.

So this month, as we gather around the Lord’s Table and the Thanksgiving table, we echo the Psalmist: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endures forever.” (Ps 136:1)

Blessed November to you all,

Pastor Ed Maanum

Weekly Events

Sunday - Divine Service 9:30 am; Sunday School & Bible Study following

Board Happenings

11/11 - School Board 6:00pm

11/18 - Board of Elders 6:00pm

Other Church Activities

- 11/1 - Men's Bible Study - 8:30am
- 11/4 - Adult Confirmation Class - 6:00pm
- 11/9 - Young Adult Bible Study - 12:00pm
- 11/11 - Adult Confirmation Class - 6:00pm
- 11/12 - Ladies' Bible Study - 5:45pm
- 11/13 - LWML Meeting - 6:00pm
- 11/15 - Men's Bible Study - 8:30am
- 11/16 - Voter's Meeting - 10:45am
- 11/16 - Youth Group - 12:00pm
- 11/29 - Decorating Church for Christmas - 9:00am

ALL SAINTS' DAY	Nov. 2 <i>(observed)</i>	All Saints' Day (Nov. 1)	Rev. 7:(2-8) 9-17	Psalm 149	1 John 3:1-3	Matt. 5:1-12
	<i>or</i> (Prop. 26)	Twenty-first S. after Pentecost	Isaiah 1:10-18	Psalm 130	2 Thess. 1:1-5 (6-10) 11-12	Luke 19:1-10
	Nov. 9 (Prop. 27)	Twenty-second S. after Pentecost	Ex. 3:1-15	Psalm 148	2 Thess. 2:1-8, 13-17	Luke 20:27-40
	Nov. 16 (Prop. 28)	Twenty-third S. after Pentecost	Mal. 4:1-6	Psalm 98	2 Thess. 3:(1-5) 6-13	Luke 21:5-28 (29-36)
	Nov. 23 (Prop. 29)	Last Sunday of the Church Year	Mal. 3:13-18	Psalm 46	Col. 1:13-20	Luke 23:27-43
THANKSGIVING	Nov. 27	Thanksgiving Day	Deut. 8:1-10	Psalm 67	Phil. 4:6-20 <i>or</i> 1 Tim. 2:1-4	Luke 17:11-19

In Other News

Stewardship

Pointing to the Rock of Ages

Not the labor of my hands Can fulfill Thy Law's demands;

Could my zeal no respite know, Could my tears forever flow,

All for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and Thou alone. (LSB 761:2)

While the classic hymn "Rock of Ages" shows up in the Lutheran Service Book in the "Hope and Comfort" section, it can also teach us a valuable lesson about Christian stewardship. If that surprises you, stay with me on this one.

No Lutheran would ever dispute the fact that our work does not save us. Ephesians 2 makes it truly clear that we are dead in our trespasses and sins and would remain in that state until Christ raises us by grace. There is not a ladder on which we can climb out of the grave that our sins have dug for us. No blood, sweat nor tears will be able to rescue us. We all know this.

Our works do not save. Christ's work on the cross of Calvary does! He bore human flesh. He carried the burden of our sin to the cross. His body was beaten, bruised

and bloodied for us. He has indeed atoned for us! This is more than enough reason for this hymn to be bouncing around in your head all day today!

But our work has a place. The place is in response to what the Father has done for us in Jesus. The Rock of Ages, who is Jesus, becomes the foundation on which our lives of faith are built. The Holy Spirit uses the means of grace to make us God's workmanship that Paul talks about in Ephesians 2:10.

Our workmanship does not display our power or prowess. Like the heavens declare the handiwork of the Creator, the works of a redeemed sinner point others to the salvation that is worked only by Jesus alone. Our work is a response to and reflection of a grace and glory that we ourselves could never accomplish or achieve.

We become stewards of the treasure that is the Gospel. When we faithfully support the work of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with our financial support, we are doing the work which points to the One who alone atones. When we come alongside a struggling sister or brother for whom Christ died and we share the stewardship work of compassion and care, we en flesh the treasure of God's love and redemption. When we make it a weekly priority to arrange our schedule to be in the Lord's House with other stewards of the Gospel to receive again and again the Gospel's precious gift, we are stewards of the Body of Christ in the congregation that points even more people to Jesus.

We cannot do this. Jesus does it through us. We are simply stewards of this precious treasure!

Sunday School - Just a reminder that we have Sunday School available from Pre-School through High School. We look forward to having you!

Young Adult Bible Study - please join us on the second Sunday of every month.

Youth! Mark your calendars, join in fun and fellowship after Sunday School on the third Sunday of every month.

Online Services: Please visit the church website www.firstknoxville.org to view our worship services and to participate in worship at your home. There are also links for Bible study and other resources.

Facebook Page: Follow First Lutheran on Facebook for all the latest updates: <https://www.facebook.com/KnoxFirstLutheran/>



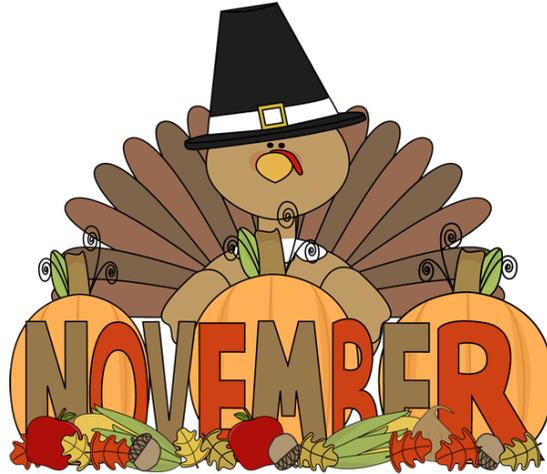
News from First Lutheran School

Top 10 Things First Lutheran School Is Thankful For This November

- 1. Our Students** – Their faith, curiosity, laughter, and love for learning remind us daily why we do what we do.
- 2. Dedicated Teachers and Staff** – The heart and soul of our school, pouring faith, knowledge, and care into every child. From teachers who have been here for 20 years to those just beginning their journey, our staff works together to help students grow in every way.
- 3. Faith-Filled Families** – Parents and grandparents who partner with us to nurture children in both academics and faith. With so many options for education, it means the world to us that so many families choose First Lutheran.
- 4. Supportive Church Community** – The prayers, encouragement, and involvement from First Lutheran Church make our mission strong. We would not have lasted 150 years without your faithful support and partnership.
- 5. Joyful Worship and Chapel Time** – There is nothing better than coming together as students and teachers to worship in Chapel or study God’s Word in religion class. These moments of shared faith are the heartbeat of our school.
- 6. Volunteers and PTL Members** – Those who give their time, energy, and creativity to make every event special. In particular, we give thanks for Doc Sternberg and Ron Toomire, whose dedication made our amazing cafeteria and kitchen update possible this year.
- 7. A Safe and Loving Learning Environment** – A place where students are known, cared for, and reminded daily that they are beloved children of God.
- 8. Special Events and Traditions** – From Grandparents’ Day to Christmas programs, these moments bring our community closer. There’s nothing better than watching students and families from different grades and backgrounds come together at FLS forming relationships that last a lifetime.
- 9. Generous Supporters** – Those who give through prayers, donations, and service so our mission continues to grow. Whether supporting our endowment or our annual fund, your generosity allows First Lutheran to thrive.

10. God's Unfailing Love and Grace – Above all, we give thanks to the Lord for His blessings that make everything possible.

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.” — Psalm 107:1



Birthdays:

Nov. 1: Melanie Bartholomay

Nov. 2: Michelle Tillman

Nov. 3: Zoe McKenzie

Nov. 4: David Cooper

Nov. 5: Kelly Sternberg

Nov. 6: Rosa Beck

Nov. 7: Allie Bryant; Kelly Miller

Nov. 9: Rick Elmore; Dustin Samuel

Nov. 10: Eric Flanigan

Nov. 12: Erik Blomenberg; Madison Slomski

Nov. 14: Deborah Mitchell; Fred Schell; Melissa Smith

Nov. 16: Aja LaDue

Nov. 20: Melissa Norton

Nov. 21: Katherine Sizemore

Nov. 23: Jackson Bender; Susan Spicer

Nov. 24: Joe Haynes; John Haynes

Nov. 25: Jubilate Maanum

Nov. 26: Tammy Gross

Nov. 27: Kevin Booth

Nov. 29: Norah Toomire; Tammy Wheat

Anniversaries:

Nov. 7: Mike & Mary Jones

Nov. 22: Cameron & Jeannie Brown

Nov. 27: Charles & Canda Kandt

Nov. 28: Randy & Joy Witt